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68TH ASSEMBLY DISTRICT

Testimony from Rep. Terry Moulton in support of AB 826—educating drivers about the state's Move Over law

Assembly Committee on Transportation--February 21, 2008

Thank you, Mr. Chairman, for holding a hearing on such short notice, and thank you, members, for your consideration.

Since 2001, Wisconsin's Move Over law has required drivers, when passing stopped emergency and construction vehicles, to slow down and move to another lane if possible. Tragically, however, police officers, construction workers and others continue to be injured and killed by passing motorists. Just last month, a sheriff's deputy was struck and killed in my area. In Milwaukee there recently was a similar incident that resulted in injury to an officer. And in the two weeks surrounding New Year's 2008, there were four incidents in the Madison area alone. The list goes on.

In an attempt to reduce the frequency of these incidents, the Department of Transportation currently publicizes our "Move Over" law on bumper stickers, brochures and nearly six million envelopes sent to Wisconsin drivers yearly. And because of your action, Mr. Chairman, the DOT now displays signs reminding drivers of the law.

This bill would take another step by requiring drivers' education courses to cover the Move Over law and by including a question on the topic on drivers' license tests. This is a long-term, low-cost solution that will save lives.

Statutorily, we currently require three other areas of driver's education: hazards posed by machinery and animals on roads; organ and tissue donation; and sharing the roadway with pedestrians, bikes, and motorcycles. Adding a fourth requiring students to be aware of the Move Over law is appropriate because it's an area where ignorance has proven lethal.

I introduced this legislation at the request of the Wisconsin County Police Association, the Wisconsin EMS Association and the Milwaukee Deputy Sheriff's Association, groups whose members are the most vulnerable to ignorance of our Move Over law. I join them in thanking you for your consideration and respectfully requesting your support.

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